

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SS-20 H-03 NSC-07 CIAE-00 PM-07

INR-10 L-03 ACDA-19 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

USIA-15 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 IO-14 OIC-04 EB-11 OMB-01

AEC-11 AECE-00 DRC-01 /162 W
----- 053500

P 171555Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3800

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 2997

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, NL, NATO

SUBJECT: DUTCH DEFENSE PLAN

REF: (A) USNATO 3411

(B) STATE 128130 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: SINCE NPG MEETING IN BERGEN DUTCH PRESS
HAS FEATURED DAILY FRONT PAGE ACCOUNTS OF ALLIES'
ADVERSE REACTION TO GON DEFENSE PLAN AND PROBLEM THIS
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HAS CREATED WITHIN COALITION. PRESS REPORTS THAT AS

RESULT THIS NEGATIVE RESPONSE, ESPECIALLY THAT OF US AND FRG, GON HAS AGREED IMPLEMENT CUTS IN ACTIVE ARMY STRENGTH ONLY AFTER MBFR PROGRESS. PM DEN UYL DENIED TO PRESS JUNE 14 THAT THERE HAD BEEN CHANGE IN GON'S PLANS TO EFFECT DEFENSE ECONOMICS. ON JUNE 15 LABOR PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE ADOPTED RESOLUTION STATING NEW DUTCH DEFENSE PLAN WOULD BE STRICTLY JUDGED ON ITS CONFORMITY WITH LEFT WING ELECTION PROGRAM. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERS ARE IRRITATED BY LABOR PARTY RESOLUTION AND POSSIBILITY OF DEFENSE ISSUE TORPEDOING COALITION HAS BECOME SOMEWHAT MORE REAL. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE BERGEN NPG MEETING DUTCH PRESS HAS FEATURED STORIES OF UNFAVORABLE ALLIED REACTION TO GON DEFENSE PLANS AND MINISTER VREDELING'S EFFORTS TO SET ALLIES' MINDS AT REST. THRUST OF REPORTING IS THAT AFTER VREDELING APPRECIATED EXTENT OF OPPOSITION TO GON DEFENSE PLAN, HE INDICATED UNTIL THERE PROGRESS IN MBFR GON WOULD SUSPEND ACTIVE TROOP CUTBACKS. VREDELING DENIED HE HAD DONE ANYTHING BUT "CLARIFY" ORIGINAL DUTCH POSITION AND EMPHASIZED IN PRESS INTERVIEW JUNE 13 THAT "HOLLAND IS NOT THINKING IN TERMS OF A UNILATERAL REDUCTION AND NEVER HAS". HE ADDED GON WOULD ALWAYS MEET ITS COMMITMENTS. FYI: MFA'S NATO DIRECTOR VAN DER VALK TOLD POLCOUNS AT LUNCHEON JUNE 13 THAT VAN DER STOEL AND VREDELING HAD ALWAYS INTENDED THAT ANY REDUCTIONS IN TROOP STRENGTH WOULD BE CONTINGENT ON MBFR PROGRESS ALTHOUGH THIS NOT SPECIFIED PRECISELY IN GON DEFENSE PLAN. END FYI:

3. QUESTIONED ABOUT REPORTS GON HAD MODIFIED ITS DEFENSE PLAN AS RESULT OF NATO PRESSURE, PM DEN UYL SAID JUNE 14, "THE CABINET HAS TAKEN NO SINGLE DECISION TO CHANGE ITS PLANS. DEFENSE MINISTER VREDELING HAS DONE NOTHING ELSE THAN CLARIFY AND EXPLAIN OUR PLANS. WE ARE NATURALLY READY TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE COMMENTS AND CRITICISM OF OUR NATO PARTNERS, BUT WE ARE NOT READY TO ABANDON OUR STARTING POINT". PRIME MINISTER, WHO ADMITTED REACTIONS OF NATO ALLIES WERE "VERY, VERY CRITICAL", SAID THAT FROM THE OUTSET IT HAD BEEN GON INTENTION TO EFFECT ACTIVE ARMY CUTBACKS ONLY AFTER SUCCESS IN

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MBFR.

4. ON JUNE 15 LABOR PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE ADOPTED RESOLUTION STRESSING LABOR PARTY'S COMMITMENT TO DEFENSE ECONOMICS AS PROVIDED IN LEFT WING ELECTION PROGRAM (KEERPUNT 72). AT INSISTENCE OF LABOR PARTY CHAIRMAN, RESOLUTION INCLUDED SENTENCE INDICATING CONTINUED CONFIDENCE IN LABOR PARTY MEMBERS IN CABINET. LABOR

GROUP SCHEDULED EXTRA MEETING OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN SEPTEMBER TO "TEST" DEFENSE PLAN (WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE SENT TO SECOND CHAMBER JULY 11) AGAINST LABOR PARTY POLICY. LABOR PARTY FLOOR LEADER VAN THIJN, WHO WARNED ABOUT "WAR OF NERVES" DEVELOPING AROUND DEFENSE QUESTION, SAID HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WOULD WATCH DEFENSE QUESTION WITH "ARGUS EYES". ASKED FOR COMMENT ON LABOR PARTY RESOLUTION, HIS KVP COUNTERPART ANDRIESEN WARNED THAT CABINET, NOT PARTY GROUPS, DETERMINE GOVERNMENT POLICY AND THAT THE CABINET IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FINDING A REASONABLE SOLUTION TO DEFENSE PROBLEM ALTHOUGH PARLIAMENT WOULD ALWAYS HAVE THE LAST WORD. ARP FLOOR LEADER AANTJES SAID HE WAS IRRITATED BY RESOLUTION'S SINGLING OUT SOCIALIST MINISTERS FOR CONFIDENCE THUS IMPLYING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC MINISTERS WERE UNRELIABLE.

5. IN VIEW CONFUSED AND CONFLICTING REPORTS ON GOVERNMENT'S DEFENSE PLAN, SMALL RIGHT WING PARTY HAS ASKED FOR AND BEEN GRANTED INTERPELLATION OF DEFENSE MINISTER VREDELING IN SECOND CHAMBER TOMORROW (JUNE 18). MAJOR PARTIES WERE UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT INTERPELLATION BEFORE NATO COMMENT ON DEFENSE PLAN RECEIVED AND DISCUSSED IN CABINET JUNE 28.

6. COMMENT: PRINCIPAL PROBLEM FOR GON WITH DEFENSE IS NOW DOMESTIC FALLOUT. IF GON'S "CLARAIFICATIONS" GAIN NATO APPROVAL (ALBEIT TEPID) FOR PLAN'S GENERAL OUTLINE, THIS WOULD SATISFY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC COALITION PARTICIPANTS WHO HAVE MADE APPROVAL OF DEFENSE PLAN CONTINGENT ON NATO OK. IF GON ALSO SOMEHOW ABLE TO MAINTAIN BUDGETARY CUTBACK FIGURE THIS MIGHT SATISFY LABOR'S UNRULY LEFT WING (THE HAGUE 2879) AND RADICALS. IN EXCEEDINGLY CONFUSED SITUATION ONLY ITEM THAT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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CLEAR IS DEFENSE ISSUE IS MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM DEN UYL COALITION HAS ENCOUNTERED SINCE IT TOOK OFFICE IN MAY 1973. DISTASTE FOR NEW ELECTIONS STILL STRONG INCENTIVE FOR COALITION PARTIES TO HANG TOGETHER BUT WITHOUT CONSIDERABLE SUPPLENESS ON PART BOTH LEFT AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, DEFENSE COULD BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT. GOULD

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